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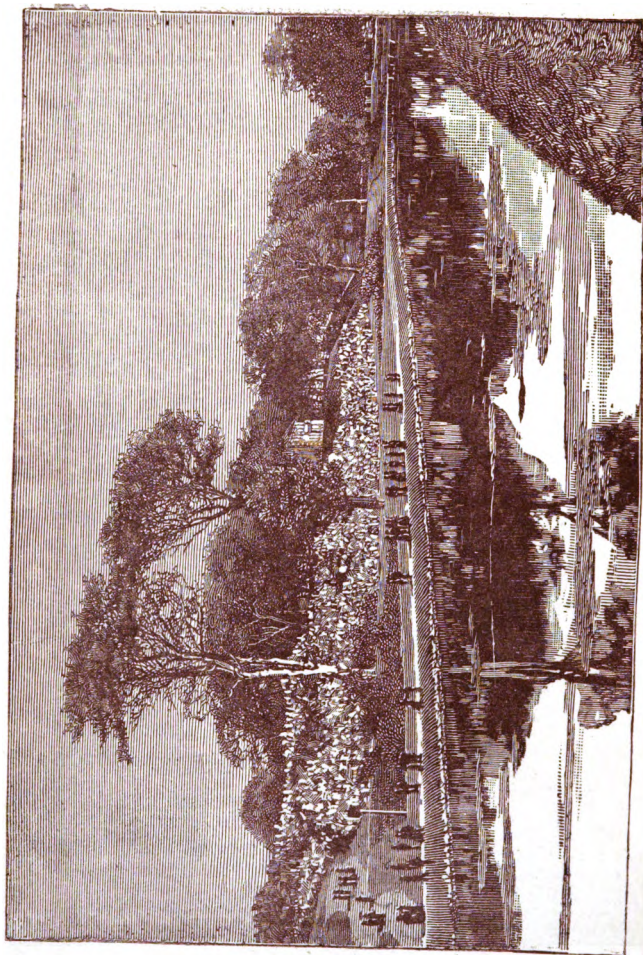


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GEMS
of
THE SILVER CITY.



ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE & SON.
1885.



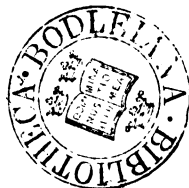
A GLIMPSE IN THE DUTHIE PARK.

(By permission of the proprietors of "The Graphic" and of Messrs. G. W. Wilson & Co., Artists, Aberdeen.)

GEMS
OF
THE SILVER CITY.

BY
JAMES VALENTINE, M.A.

With a Coloured Plan.



ABERDEEN :
PRINTED AT THE "FREE PRESS" OFFICE.
1885.

*Gough vidd's Aberdeen
8 2.*



[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]

NOTE.

On the suggestion of some friends the following articles, which originally appeared in the *Evening Gazette*, have been slightly expanded and collected together in their present shape. A limited edition (a hundred copies only) of this pamphlet has accordingly been printed.

Those who are acquainted with the small measure of time which the author's ordinary avocation leaves at his disposal for writing, and other distracting circumstances which need not be here specified, will, doubtless, excuse any inequality in the merit of the sketches; and any others into whose hands this little *brochure* may fall will, the author hopes, do the same, more especially as the idea of producing a series of articles did not occur to him at the outset.

The title, "Gems of the Silver City," may seem rather an ambitious one for such a booklet, but has been devised with a view to secure the copyright for future service.

J. V.

ABERDEEN, December 5th, 1885.

SUMMER RAMBLES

IN

DUTHIE PARK.

BY


JAMES VALENTINE, M.A.

When the garden no longer is leafless and chilly,
But warm with the sunshine, and bright with the sheen
Of rich flowers, the moss-rose, and the bright tiger lily,
Barbaric in pomp as an Ethiop queen.

—*Moore.*

SUMMER RAMBLES IN DUTHIE PARK.

I.

 TEMPERATURE of 88° Fahr. in the shade, such as was actually indicated during a stroll on Saturday, 25th July, as the curious old sundial near the ornamental fountain chronicled the hour of one afternoon, was a sufficient novelty in Duthie Park to make any visitor—at least a Scotchman—rejoice that nature has compensations, and that, in common with the rest of the country, the trees in the Park were then, as they still are, clothed in exuberant foliage. The dry autumn and late spring have projected leafy June into July, as it were, and July, in its turn, into August. This is a practical age, and, as Dr Harvey in his letters on trees states, any sound theory ought to be able to supply a reasonable answer to the query—*cui bono?* Without discussing with that learned author the commercial importance of due attention to forestry, we can see at once the force, as applied to city park arboriculture, of his advice gathered from Sir Walter Scott—“Be aye stickin’ in a tree, Jock; it’ll grow whaun ye’re sleepin’.” Let us derive comfort from this reflection, which will lead us to feel that the foreseeing efforts at providing shelter by the numerous trees and shrubs planted on the west side of the park will bear fruition some day. Art is long, we are told, and so is Nature in this matter—but it is sure; and the park is, for the most part, one might say, but a recent creation. The exposed situation of the park not unfrequently leads one to think, as a chilly breeze sweeps across the open lawn or parade-ground in its centre, how cold a place it is generally. But this same exposure enables it to luxuriate in every transient period of sunshine accorded to this unfavoured

region. The park looks best in bright, warm weather. And never since its establishment has it looked so well as at present. This fact is worthy of being kept in view, particularly by strangers, who will find an agreeable variety in a stroll through the parterre, after exhausting such other sights as the city affords. The way is easily found, and the most finical critic will fail to detect a single weed in the numerous flower beds. Mr Peter Harper, the chief gardener, seems to sleep with his weather eye open. He is not a man to let the grass grow under his feet, and yet the grass looks remarkably well, notwithstanding the protracted drought experienced this summer. It is striking testimony to the ability and care of Mr Harper and his staff that many sightseers from Glasgow should admit that the public parks there cannot vie with our own opened by Princess Beatrice. Equal credit is awarded by strangers to Mr Robert Walker for his treatment of the limited area at the Victoria Park under his management. Imitation is, however, the sincerest flattery, and the extent to which amateur gardeners (who seem to grow in numbers like Hydra's heads) find models in the carpet bedding and other floral designs in these resorts speaks volumes. This innocent plagiarism is rather to be commended, as a public park keeper has no copyright in his devices, however ingenious or attractive.

By whichever of the four gates the stroller entered the park he could not fail soon to note the fine effect produced in the end of July by the rich display of Canterbury bells fringing the tree and shrub clumps here and there. There are only eight out of 182 species of the genus *campanula* believed to exist in Great Britain, but the four, so "fayre in sight," found in Duthie Park sufficed to present a charming contrast between their racemose and, perchance, rose-coloured flowers and the full green foliage of the thriving young trees in the background. Where sweetwilliams, antirrhinums, Brompton stock, or foxglove form the edging of these clusters, the picture is quite as pretty, as may be seen near the old obelisk adjoining the east drive. But, perhaps, the best thing for a stranger to do early, so as to grasp the *tout ensemble*, is to ascend the mound near the rail-

way line. From this easy elevation a delightful view may be had on a clear day. To the north and east may be seen the outlines of spires and buildings, graceful silhouettes on the sky line; while if the gaze be directed westwards, the eye roams over the diversified stretch of wood and stream and mountain of the Deeside valley, with the azure peaks of Clochnaben and Mount Battock in the distance, and dark Lochnagar towering in stern majesty on the far horizon. Should the visitor face the south, as the bronze representation of Wallace might do when it is put up, the landscape is by no means devoid of loveliness. At his feet lies the park with its expanse of turf, flowers, lakes, shrubs, and trees, while beyond the silvery Dee rise on a smiling slope the lands of Kincoorth, and above that again the parish church of Nigg, which wags call the "kirk visible," while the view is terminated by the crest of the eastern termination of the Grampians. Had it been the good fortune of a stranger to take his stand on the top of the mound about the beginning of June, the north front of the Grampian ridge could not but have secured his observation, from the blaze of the long range of wild whins and broom in full flower. But this gay blossom, like that of the selected clump inside the park of different brooms and whins, including the white Portugal and yellow Spanish, the cream-coloured *genista præcox* and the double-flowered whin *genista tinctoria*, is now gone. A fine landscape effect is produced all summer by the group of thirteen trees standing in the centre of the dew-scented lawn.

Everyone is not gifted with an intellect of the same timbre as that of a Jussieu or of a Linnæus. The sesquipedalian and outlandish jargon of the botanist is a fearful deterrent from scientific inquiry by ordinary mortals, who are content with such inspiration as may be derived from the poets or from the humbler and less flowery language of the general writer. With Shakespeare let us agree that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, and that a merely casual stroller at random may find tongues in trees as readily as a savant.

It would be manifestly impossible to give, within the limits of a newspaper article, even a bare cata-

logue of the vegetable treasures to be met with in a well-stocked public park, forty-four acres in extent, with upwards of thirty thousand trees and shrubs in the ten acres which sum up the borders and patches for that purpose, not to speak of more ephemeral productions in the shape of flowers in endless profusion and variety. A systematic observer might do wonders, however, by mapping out a route, say commencing at the west gate (in Whinbill Road) and in his perambulations keeping always the open lawn on his right. The verge on his other hand cannot fail to interest him. He will also do well if he take a passing peep at the vases distributed throughout the park, gaily bedecked as these are with variegated and scarlet geraniums, dracænas, lobelias, &c. Besides the usual varieties of trees, more uncommon species will here and there arrest his glance. There are, for instance, in all about a hundred specimens of an elegant, tropical-looking tree, with dark green leaves, which is labelled as "*dimorphanthus mandschuricus*," but which it is much easier to think of as the umbrella tree simply. There are also, interspersed at suitable points, some five score variegated planes, numbers of them beauties, besides a dozen or so specimens of acacias (*acacia inermis robinia*, &c.). The young conifers are doing well, and comprise certain comparatively rare varieties, such as *picea concolor*. In fact all the trees seem to be thriving, from the most ordinary and undistinguished member to the fern-leaved birches, weeping oak, weeping ash, variegated plane, and *picea nobilis* planted by the late Miss Duthie, the generous donor of the park, and to the oak planted by the fair hands of Princess Beatrice.

The carpet principle is a very popular style of bedding with professional gardeners in this quarter, and strangely enough seems to elicit more interest in a majority of the public than the flower beds which present a more gorgeous aspect. The style, however, gives scope for variety in planting, and the liability to damage is not so great as in the case of flowering plants. A favourable exhibit of this plan of procedure may be espied in a round bed in front of the west lodge, where the groundwork is *hernaria glabra*. An agave or aloe ornaments the centre,

and besides prickly pear and golden feather, there are some of the scarcer sorts of carpeting plants with formidable-looking names, such as *mesembryanthemum cordifolium*. By far the most perfect specimen of this kind of work, however, not only in design but in colour, is a series of three beds on the south side of the mound, and seen with great advantage from its summit. The central bed is circular in figure, and embraces in its interior a star-shaped outline, and the ground-work is *sedum glaucum*, one of the stonecrops. The end beds here are mitre or shield-shaped, with elegant interior tracery, in figure like a Prince of Wales feather; and the immense number of plants required in filling up the outline may be judged from the fact of there being 1700 *echeverias* alone. Gardeners seem to find the *echeveria* a *sine qua non* in their somewhat laborious efforts at triumphing in this department of their art.

But if the uninitiated fail to appreciate this system thoroughly, and feel inclined to think that, since the time when Adam delved, flowers have constituted the brightest things which earth on her broad bosom loves to cherish, that

In every clime, in every age,
Mankind have felt their pleasing sway;
And lays to them have decked the page
Of moralist and minstrel gay;

to such an unsophisticated soul the rosery, just across the drive to the front of the west lodge, must allure the eye and entrance the olfactory nerves. Five hundred radiant rose bushes are a treat to look at, and a perfume feast to those who can detect and love a sweet odour. The number of varieties is not great, but in show and fragrance enough. One round bed occupies the centre of the rosery, the other ten beds being arranged at intervals in two concentric rings round that centre, and each being of a bent oblong shape. The roses grown there are all of useful kinds for those fond of gardening, fine and free-flowering varieties, whose names he who will may read on the sticks beside them. Fanciers can identify the John Hopper, General Jacquiminot, Duke of Edinburgh, La France, Magna Charta, Gloire de

Dijon, and the like for themselves. It may be true, as Prideux says, that

The rose that to the sun's warm kiss uplifts its blushing cheek

Is but a rainbow type of life, departing whilst we speak ;

but it is fortunate that the stock here enables the gardener to "cut and come again," as ravages have been caused in their glory meantime owing to the numbers culled for recent civic banquets. Nature will soon fill up the gaps and fresh displays bloom till autumn's pale face appal these floral beauties which deck the earth but for a time.

On either side of the Good Templar drinking fountain are beds planted with bronze geraniums, very nicely banded and edged. An octagonal bed studded with gorgeous geraniums, calceolarias, and lobelias, on the north side of the upper drive, presents a truly resplendent appearance ; and towards the Polmuir gate are also four oval beds containing various carnations and pinks alternately, which look well indeed when the carnations show. An elegant and pleasing display is also met with in an elliptical bed filled with nasturtiums and selected striped petunias, reared in the greenhouse, edged with *koniga variegata*. A scroll-shaped bed near the Iona cross, with its ivy-leaved geraniums, mixed with Trentham purple pansy and edged with *ajuga reptans*, is likewise very effective.

It is of interest to note that Mr Harper has laid out, between the mound and the Polmuir gate, what one may call a special botanic garden on a small scale, *à la Jussieu*. Side by side we find different sorts of lettuces, 24 in all, in fine order. Beets and ornamental grasses are also to be seen there, arranged similarly, and the experiment is one deserving the inspection of all interested in such matters. The beets include healthy specimens of the sugar beet, perpetual or spinach, and Chilian beet, and, in short, beets most suitable for colour in bedding, or most likely to tickle the palate of the gastronome.



II.

RESUMING our perambulation, close beside the Polmuir gate lodge is a diminutive bed with a variegated yew tree in the centre; and right across, on the other side of the east drive, is a small, neat, round bed on the carpet system, with a young specimen of the *pinus nobilis*, showing a solitary cone, in the middle of the plot. This tiny bed is panelled in the shape of a wheel, with dot plants in centre of panels, fish-bone thistles, cotyledons, &c., and can hardly fail to please the enlooker.

Proceeding along the east drive, we find, not far off, a capital trefoil-shaped bed edged with Mangle's ivy-leaved geranium, a most useful variety for massing or banding plots. The interior is golden feather, with lobelia and flower-of-spring geranium, and this plot gives a peculiarly brilliant display after a refreshing shower. Farther on in the direction of Arthurseat House, we fall on an oblong bed with promising iresines, said to be new hereabouts, but generally admired by those who have seen them. A second oblong bed, with diminutive agaves or aloes in the middle, is stocked with alternantheras, a class of plants also said to be quite new in this quarter.

Farther on still the eye lights with pleasure on the group of noble trees beside the old house of Arthurseat. Compared with these, those planted since the park was laid out are but pigmies. And naturally so, as these fine specimens appear to have been planted in the days when George the Third was king. The house, if the mason's inscription is to be believed, was built in 1779, and these trees are in all likelihood coeval. In the recent sultry weather the shelter of the fine umbrageous planes, limes, beeches, and so on, was grateful, and the missing heir (Arthur Steuart Williamson) would open his eyes at their more than Vallombrosian shade were he to

turn up again in the Granite City. One might escape out of the glare of the sunshine and "squat" under the spreading chestnut tree (there is but one), or, to use a more classical phrase, assume the attitude of Tityrus—*recubans sub tegmine fagi*. It is Thomson, we think, who says—

Now, while I taste the sweetness of the shade,
While Nature lies around deep-lulled in noon,
Now come, bold Fancy, spread a daring flight,
And view the wonders of the Torrid Zone.

But from our shady retreat it is but a step to see a few of these in real life. A tropical bed has been placed here, in the arborous shelter. It is in outline like the ace of clubs, and contains a fair specimen of the seaforthia elegans, an Australian palm, besides a whole row of eucalyptus plants, and another row of the New Zealand flax-plant (phormium tenax). Two varieties of the tobacco plant also grace the plot, some of them with flowers forming on them. The other exotics are the brown-leaved castor-oil plant (ricinus Gibsoni); variegated maize; the honey plant or melianthus major (several specimens); the yucca or Adam's needle; the echeveria metallica, the biggest form of that tribe; variegated lavatera, one of the mallow; acanthus mollis, a favourite tropical plant with gardeners; and others. The bed is edged with alternantheras and carpeted with ice plant, a demi-hardy annual, so called from the globules that form on it.

On the slope looking towards the river Dee, and south of Arthurseat House, are three fine beds in the carpet style. The middle one—a large star, 28 feet in diameter—is very much admired, and from its position is a conspicuous object in the park, so much so as to be seen with great distinctness from the road on the Kincorth side.

Another prominent feature in this part of the park is the rootwork. The rootwork is almost complete y clothed with a wealthy profusion of plants—honey-suckle in abundance, foxgloves in perfection, trailing plants, such as variegated and green periwinkle, lilies, poppies, cow parsnip, candytuft, and no end of ferns, while a select number of detached trees, such as acacia, scarlet chestnut, and walnut, complete

the quaint effect of the rootwork and its gnomie recesses, which are a pleasing novelty to so many.

The rockery is also at present a very striking feature. To enumerate the whole of the vegetable treasures, all the hardy herbaceous plants which besprinkle it, would occupy columns. Nearly eighty varieties of saxifragas occur, besides Alpine plants, stonecrops, and sempervivums (house leeks). The copious mass of verdure, flower, and foliage is really a fine sight, especially when the sun shines brightly on the spar and whinstone. A most agreeable diversity of colour is caused by the intermixture of the pansy "freaked with jet," wallflower, foxglove, speedwell, queen of the meadow, gladioli, and the tussilago fragrans, which latter can hardly be the plague flower of which we read—

No gemlike eye glitters in thy pale face,
No rich aroma breathes from thy dull lips.

Here also is wafted on the night air the gentle odour of the evening primrose. Here also one finds four varieties or so of the cistus, "fragile and delicate, whose life's a day, drinking of amber sunshine madly deep to bloom and die!" The beautiful but fugacious cup-shaped hermaphrodite flowers of the rock rose are, however, very pleasant to look at while they last, whether white or golden yellow. Near the rockery is a large elliptical bed of elegant succulent and curious plants well worth inspection.

Alongside the lower drive are a series of large beds where the wall gives place to the railing, thus admitting the sunlight. The different varieties of violas and pansies with which they are chiefly filled vary infinitely in colour from pure white to nearly black. Each opening shows a series of three plots, the extremities being quieter in tone, while in the middle a gay and gorgeous array of almost dazzling brilliance assails the eye. A great variety is afforded, and no doubt a stimulus to the refinement of the taste of the increasing class who cultivate flowers for themselves, is also to be derived from the twelve beds on the higher terrace, which we cannot attempt to describe in detail. The care of those in charge may be traced in the distinct way some of these are laid out in the ribbon style.

An agreeable change from the floral display will be gained by a stranger who will watch a merry group of young men and maidens at a lively game of lawn tennis, or who will take a survey of the lakes from the bridge in the park. The exact curve of beauty may not be scrupulously followed in the contour, and the weirs have somewhat of a formal appearance for cascades, compared with those of Dame Nature. But it is pleasant, so near the serried habitations of a large city, to watch the swans skim gracefully along, or to note the movements of the geese, waterhens, and other aquatic fowls ; to mark the splash of the Loch Leven trout ; or to rest the eye on clumps of water-lilies and bulrushes. The jets in the lower lakes are really very elegant, although the water cannot be said to be particularly limpid.

If to these attractions we add that of an *al fresco* performance by one of the volunteer bands, that stranger, or townsman either, is ill to please, indeed, who would think an hour wasted in the Duthie Park.

'Tis fair to see our cultured buds
 Their shining tints unfold,
 In leaves that wear the sapphire's hue,
 Or mock the sunset's gold.

For the accommodation of the infirm who may require a rest, of him that is fond of a meditative "weed," of fond lovers whispering soft nothings, of paterfamilias and mamma discussing domestic affairs, or of casual acquaintances disposed for a talk on matters of Church and State, the Town Council have provided thirty garden seats at convenient situations in the park, those near the drinking fountain in the lower part being in an extremely pleasant, not to say picturesque, position. One may also find a seat and protection from rain or the sun's ardent rays in the verandah near the east riverside entrance, or in the shelter on the west bank of the upper lake.

Aberdeen, 12th August, 1885.

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Donor of the Park.—Miss Elizabeth Crombie Duthie of Ruthrieston.

Designer of the Park.—Mr. Wm. R. M'Kelvie, Architect, Dundee.

First Turf Cut.—By Earl of Aberdeen, Aug. 27, 1881.

Park Opened.—By H.R.H. Princess Beatrice, Sept. 27, 1883.

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Plan
OF
DUTHIE PARK,
Sept., 1885,
BY THE AUTHOR.
(Copyright.)

MORE RAMBLES
IN THE
ABERDEEN PARKS.


BY
JAMES VALENTINE, M.A.

The sultry summer past, September comes,
Soft twilight of the slow-declining year.

—Wilcox.

MORE RAMBLES IN THE ABERDEEN PARKS.

I.

 PUBLIC park strictly so called is a comparatively recent institution in Aberdeen. Excellent opportunities of securing suitable areas near the heart of the districts where the masses reside were no doubt neglected in the past. The same reproach and want of enterprise attaches to most towns. Expense stood in the way, and the Fathers of Bon-Accord were content with the magnificent recreation ground found in the Links. But the savannah of the East End has within the past thirteen years been supplemented, first, by the formation of Victoria Park, Rosemount, in the north-west part of the town; second, by the laying out of Union Terrace Gardens in its centre; and, third, by the gift to the community, by the late Miss E. C. Duthie of Ruthrieston, of Duthie Park in the south-west. A free revenue is derived from the Links, but the care and attention bestowed on the other three popular resorts involves an assessment under the Public Parks (Scotland) Act for their maintenance. Whatever may come of the renewed suggestion for the acquisition of the wooded property of Union Grove (now in the market at a reduced price) for an additional pleasure park, it will thus be seen that as it is Aberdeen stands fairly well among the large burghs, at least of Scotland, considering its present limits and population. Ideas expand as time rolls on, and a broadening interest is awakened all round in the propriety of brightening the lot of the inhabitants of our crowded and increasing cities, cheering the heart of the artisan, gladdening the minds of children, delighting young maidens and men of all ranks, attracting the aged, and relieving

the turmoil and worry of the harassed professional man, by means of well-equipped and well looked after pleasure parks in as convenient positions as may be. The repugnance to a small tax wears away, and the Aberdonians now enjoy the variety and facilities at their command as much as anywhere. To the educative influences to be derived from the parks in Aberdeen *per se*, has been added this season the enlivenment, not to say instruction, of forty-four excellent open-air band performances, in which the east-end prairie has participated equally with the other places named.

In supplement, therefore, of the two articles, entitled "Summer Rambles in Duthie Park," which we published lately, and which met with considerable acceptance, we venture to offer the following notes. And as the last rose of summer will soon fade, and the russet red and more sombre shades of autumn replace the glory and brilliance of balmy days, we desire without further preamble to introduce the reader to

The Victoria Park.

Dairymen grazed their milch kine here fourteen years ago. The soil being naturally poor, the lea, unbroken by the plough for half a century, afforded but a modest feast to the useful herd distributed over the stretch of the then five ordinary grass parks along the Low Stocket Road, known as Glennie's Parks. The scheme then emerged of laying out the middle portion as a pleasure ground, reserving a strip at either end for feuing purposes. This idea has been carried into execution. The area of about fourteen acres in the middle is now the Victoria Park, and the two strips of feuing ground have been disposed of advantageously. Including the pavilion shelter, £4402 has been expended in the formation of the park, against which must be set off the value of the feu-duties capitalised. A number of ash trees in the cross and longitudinal rows alongside the loose stone fences of the quondam Glennie's Parks were retained. It is perhaps to be regretted that Glennie, or his forbears, or "authors," did not leave a legacy of a few trees of a more umbrageous description, and

of a nobler and more majestic appearance, such as the beeches farther along the road. Judging from present promises in the park, posterity will have no cause to accuse us on the score of inattention to varied and ornamental arboriculture. However, the best had to be made of the material available, and it was a wise discretion, for instance, which induced the woodman to spare the group of three ash trees near the shelter, which artists love to introduce into their sketches, standing out as they do from several points of view in graceful relief against the horizon. More melancholy sensations are engendered at the sight of an aged laburnum in one of the coppices, throwing out fresh branches and leaves, but rent in the stem, and rotten and crumbling at the heart. But we have no wish to indulge in moralising of a sombre vein, and must pass on.

From such slender beginnings as those alluded to originated the "People's Park" of to-day. The progress of thirteen years is marked by all whose recollection extends sufficiently far back. To the stranger we would say that each year has shown an advance, and he will now find Victoria Park a little paradise, to use an Oriental word literally signifying a pleasure ground. Indeed, an Eastern poet's imagery would not be wasted on a word painting of its floral gems, or a description of its landscape beauties and the treasures of the arboretum.

Every visitor entering the park by the principal gate in Watson Street surveys with spontaneous approval the attractive picture afforded by the keeper's cottage hard by, at present (5th September) robed in its elegant autumn drapery of climbing plants of profuse luxuriance and charming and diversified hues. The lovely purple flowers of the clematis mingle in handsome variety with the bright yellow blossom of the canary creeper, the warm ruddy display of the nasturtium, and the ephemeral white flowers of the rock rose. The virginian creeper, whose leaves have now assumed a scarlet colour, and the silver-striped ivy also cling lovingly to the cottage wall in front, while to the rear the evergreen cotoneaster and male ivy will deck the gardener's abode even when—

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds and naked woods, and meadows brown
and sera.

The acanthus and blue lobelia which adorn the front window boxes, 'along with the brilliant array of geraniums and other resplendent flowers which bespangle the border around the cottage base, and the more sober-tinted carpet plants, also contribute no mean share to the graceful effect. The tassel tree (*garrya elliptica*), which is likewise trained along the lattice wirework, has not now the same show as earlier in the season; but in full vigour still, on the trellis beside the cottage door,

The faint passion-flower, the sad and holy,
Tells of diviner hopes.

The *passiflora cœrulea* on the flower-kirtled lodge, as we gaze on its tendrils and metallic-looking, dark-green leaves and palish flowers, inspires some reflections. One cannot expect to find in this "northern city cold" those endless beautiful festoons of *passifloræ* which bewildered Baron Humboldt in the arcades of the great South American forests; but it is pleasant to contemplate this particular solitary specimen of one of the few hardy species of passion-flower that will thrive in our climate out of doors, and ornament verandahs, deck porches, or grace the fronts of houses, as it is actually in fruit, a sight not often seen so far north. Before he proceed farther, we advise the visitor to cast a long and admiring look at the hexagonal bed with curved perimeter just across the main walk opposite the keeper's cottage, with its Australian palm in the centre and Crystal Palace lobelia, Jerusalem star, geraniums, sedums, *mesembryanthemums*, &c., which fill up the panels of the church wheel-window outlines in the interior of the figure. Is not there a wealth and a harmonious blending of colour and a delicacy and beauty which letterpress printing cannot portray? Come, therefore, and see for yourself, O gentle reader, if you have not already done so. The printed card in the glass frame will enable any one to identify each plant that may attract him most.



II.

WHILE still at the threshold of the park we should advise any one not to attempt to first a formal round, nor to confine himself to the regulation walks. He is free to tread the sward. And by roaming about at random not only will unexpected minutiae strike him, but general results and landscape effects be better seen and appreciated. Vistas will open up in this way, and distance lend enchantments to the view now and then which would not otherwise be revealed. The belt of tree and shrub planting round the whole exterior of the park contains myriads of plants, from the rough burr thistle spreading wide, to the ash far stretching his umbrageous arm, and the lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak, and many rarer things. Amid this *embarras de richesse* an attempt at an exhaustive, specific catalogue would be useless. Mark also how the tree clumps here and there in the interior of the park are effectively disposed of both for shelter and for look. The variety of different kinds of trees is immense, and the selection has been wise. All has been done almost that could be done to suit our climate, and in such a small place one wonders where any other beauties of the vegetable world could be put unless an opportunity arise for extending the grounds northwards on the other side of the Stocket Road. Unfortunately the soil is not damp enough for signal success in evergreen trees. Conifers threaten not to attain the tall height of pines on Norwegian hills—but deciduous trees thrive, and have been in particularly luxuriant foliage this summer. The contrasts of the verdure above are most diversified and pleasing, and the undergrowth is profuse and natural as in any dingle or dell. There is no useless jungle either, as the ivies and evergreens beneath may be expected to make an appearance when the loftier plants are stripped of their frondage, and discon-

solately naked. This will be seen not only in the detached copses, but meantime there and in the belt of trees round the verge of the whole park, where dense underwood, honeysuckle, shrub, and brake conceal the bare earth. Add the many-coloured fringes show that apprehensions of impeding the lawn-mower do not deter from pleasant results. What can be prettier, for instance, than an edging of *myosotis dissitiflora*, one of the forget-me-nots, of exquisite blue tinge, or as dot plants round trees? Or, why should such a reason prevent that feathery isolated tussock of pampas grass, with its arching leaves, or that isolated *ferula*, or that detached New Zealand flax plant? Bathed in the afternoon sunbeams the large flowers of the *tritomas* (or "red-hot poker" plant), with the cabbage palm in their midst, near the Thomson Street gate, look very striking from the distance of the main walk as well as close at hand, while the same remark applies to the elliptical bed near the continuation of the walk from Thomson Street towards the Stocket gate. This bed, with its ornamental foliage plant (*auralia*) in the centre, standard tobacco plants, Paris daisies, dark blue lobelias, and *mesembryanthemum tricolor* presented a gorgeous appearance all summer, and as now remodelled is more brilliant than ever.

Perhaps, also, the stroller will espy a band of summer snow in a miniature ravine under a woolly-leaved poplar, looking in the distance like a cascade in the forest primeval. Formal landscape gardening often becomes ridiculous, but there is nothing overdone here or artificial-looking. *Ars est celare artem*, and if another little knoll crowned with graceful fern nestling under the trees as in the wild wood is but a mimic representation, it is well the relief and irregularity of nature are so unobtrusively copied. There are also a number of umbelliferous plants at intervals, the large leaves of which in their due season form a charming contrast with the smaller leaves of the deciduous trees in the background. Among these, besides the giant cow parsnips, which made a great display earlier in the season, might be mentioned the *polygonum sachalinense*, or giant knotweed, a free-growing, perennial, hardy herbaceous plant (from the Amoor country), with oblong

leaves, six to eight inches long, and whose flowers grow in small compound racemes; *crambe cordifolia*, a notable species of kail; and *rheum emodi*, or giant rhubarb. *Ferulas* also abound. Fruit trees are plentiful, and the guignes and service berries (vulgarly called mulberries) have proved sad temptations to the boys who throng the place. So, also, have the berries of the mountain ash or rowan tree, of which there are many. Chestnut and black thorn trees may also be seen in fruit. The lower side of the park is particularly beautiful, and the fine shade in the lower walk was relished in summer. At the north-east angle of the side-walks, near the keeper's cottage, is a magnificent royal fern, somewhat hidden behind a *rhododendron*. This noble specimen is of most unusual size in this quarter, and greatly admired by all who look on it. The border of carnations here is also most lovely. Roses have been exceptionally fine in the park this season, and one regrets their heyday is now past.

Such facts ought to convince the stroller that he is not in a mere garden, but in a public pleasure park. Bulky treatises have been written as to what is the *beau idéal* of a public park. We do not want the hobbies of a specialist or the notions of a mere jobbing gardener. The desideratum is not a purely sub-tropical garden, or a leaf garden, or a geometrical garden. Every taste must be met as far as possible, and lumpish monotony and unmeaning masses avoided, in short, anything conducive to the exclusion of interest and variety, and too often of beauty and taste. We, therefore, throw in our vote with those who would fain have "such gardens as, by happy combinations of the materials at our disposal, shall be ever-changing museums of beautiful life." These canons have been intelligently followed in Victoria Park, and we find the admired system of gardening pursued which interests all beholders and not the horticulturist alone.

On either side of the main walk proceeding westward from Watson Street, one finds four large rectangular oblong beds (about 45 feet by 12 feet each) which rival anything to be met with at Hampton Court Palace, the prettiest place in all England. The plants here are not named, and amid the profusion we can allude to a few only. Tiny

graceful arches covered with shining nasturtiums span the little gravel paths which meander through the four plots at the extremities of the walk; beautiful petunias and gay chrysanthemums in great numbers allure the eye. Here also are many splendid fuchsias laden with rich bells; asters, stocks, and violas in abundance; highly floriferous carnations; the swan daisy; and a warm display of fine gladioli. In four the middle beds there is a slight camber on the ground with a good result, the plants rising in a regular and pleasing gradation from the more dwarfish at the sides to the taller dahlias, which rear their bright and more massive heads in the higher centre line. The trim appearance of these beds, adorned with attractive beets, and dwarf hemp from China, intermingled with lobelia speciosa, mignonette, various coloured marigolds, canary creeper, sweet scented honey flower, and melianthus major, besides an immense variety of other gems, suggests a head that schemed and a hand that carried out the plan early in the morning, looking forward to producing an ever-varying kaleidoscopic display, and striving to show how—

Flowers as the changing seasons roll along
 Still wait on earth and added beauties lend :
 Around the smiling Spring a lovely throng
 With eager rivalry her steps attend ;
 Others with Summer's brighter glories blend ;
 Some grace wild Autumn's more majestic mien ;
 While some few lingering blooms the brow befriend
 Of hoary Winter, and with grace serene
 Enwreath the King of Storms with mercy's tender sheen.

Above the brilliant and harmoniously assorted mass of colour beneath rise such exotics as the castor oil plant (ricinus Africanus, and other varieties), with gracefully expanded leaves, the eucalyptus globulus, the orange tree, and the finely-branched subtropical plant Ferdinanda eminens, with its opposite broad angularly-lobed leaves. Acacias, myrtles, and abutilons are also placed here in great variety, and round the large fountain one finds specimens of Lobb's arbor vitæ (a native of California, where it grows 40 to 50 feet high), a very ornamental plant, singly or in groups, with its upright stem and graceful branches, and of the Nootka Sound thujaopsis, a

tall, beautiful cedar in its North American habitat. A change is afforded from the exquisite large beds by the chaste circular plot, with elegant cabbage palm in the centre, on the south side of the main walk, and by a round cluster of superb geraniums just opposite on the north side.

III.

THERE are plenty of seats in the park on which to rest and look about. Though "in the country," this park is now in reality hemmed in by buildings on three sides. Not much, therefore, can be seen looking out from it, the prospect being obstructed except towards Westburn and Elmhill on the north. A good idea of the park and of certain landscape effects may, however, be gained by a sweeping glance made from beside the large ornamental fountain in its centre. This fountain (designed by Mr J. B. Pirie) is one of the handsomest in Great Britain. It is constructed of fourteen different varieties of granite stones, either polished or fine axe-dressed. It was presented to the citizens by the granite polishers and master builders of Aberdeen as a monument of our famous special industry, and had this graceful, tapering structure been placed in a town where the eye of the inhabitants is not so familiar with granite as is the case in the Granite City, it would have been valued far above more elaborate specimens in cheaper material. It is, however, a great attraction where it stands, especially to juveniles, who romp here in immense numbers, free from all danger of horses and vehicles. The little wanderers gaze out their little eyes at the troutlets and gold and silver fish and minnows in the cistern surrounding the fountain, and engage in more or less innocent prattle about them. The gardener has also done his best to decorate the surroundings of this elegant structure, which cost about £1200 to put there (a sum not included in the expense before mentioned). The mimic islets are crowned by such plants as Kilmarnock willows with beautiful pendant

branches. Nothing could be more appropriate. The graceful lines of the *yucca recurvans* (Adam's needle) stand out well as viewed from the lower ground at the foot of the stairs. The "dear little shamrock" will also rejoice the visitor from Erin, while the aquatic lilies, royal fern and umbelliferous plants attract all onlookers. The ornamental grasses also make a fine display; these include sugar, canary, and weeping grasses, and, most striking of all, some bamboos (*bambusa metake*) which the uninitiated would hardly take for grasses at all.

Along the broad cross walk north and south from the fountain are flower beds radiant with brilliant autumn phloxes of every rainbow hue, just as there was an equally glorious display of azure larkspur some time ago. This indicates a laudable study to produce a rotation of effects, and, indeed, all the flower-beds meet the requirement of being as graceful as bouquets well and simply made, and show a fine mingling of bloom, one succeeding another. The dwarf iron rail or screen near the fountain is a perfect treat for the eye. The lovely sweet pea flings its flexible branches over it in all directions, and honeysuckles clothe the rails with their fairy trumpets. The bright *tropeolum*, the gorgeous *nasturtium*, and the vast number of everlastings also produce a most charming effect, heightened by the fine appearance of the double-flowering cherry trees (not now in blossom), and the leopard-spotted plane-tree, and other nice little trees near by. Violets, poppies, *scrophulosa nodosa variegata*, the orange flower, and a host of others also add to the beauty of the picture.

It is astonishing what results may be produced by the simplest means. Along the border of the two branching paths from the large fountain, all the way to where they are spanned by honeysuckle arches, is the finest possible carpet of the tiniest plants, presenting an inimitable appearance. And yet what is this but fragrant wild thyme from the Links? Continuing along the right-hand path, we come with a pleasant surprise on the shady recess where the pellucid stream of the drinking fountain murmurs gently. Who could have expected to find there was such a mass of rockwork here, which looked so natural,

And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers!

How natural also is the mook ravine like the channel of a small Scotch mountain torrent. One might say of this rockwork—

O'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And in it there were young flowers blowing
Of gentle breath and hue.

All lovers of wild flowers must admire the display of fox-glove, wild geranium, ivies, rasps, thyme, thistles (milk), bluebell, bramble, and fern which deck the stones, as well as an immense variety of other rock and Alpine plants filling up almost every chink. It is also covered with black American spruces, copper beeches, planes, rowan trees, cherry trees, laburnums, hollyhocks, &c., a complete mass of verdure. It is surmounted by a toy castle which does not impress us. We should prefer to see on the summit a lifesize figure of Helen MacGregor or Young Norval. There is no scope for lakes in this park, and a specimen of a statue would be an agreeable variety in ornamentation. In front of the fountain a fine mass of white blossom is shown on the group of the shrubby "queen of the meadow" spiræa, which abounds elsewhere through the park. Near this fountain is a very pretty row of honeysuckle arches, with blue thistles alongside. The burdock thistle, the American whipcord willow tree, some fine young oaks and pines, and other trees of rarer sorts, may also be seen near here, besides a regular pyramid of honey-flower. The woodbine temple or honeysuckle pyramids round a tree near the shelter also continues.

The greenhouse and propagating house are in admirable order. They are full and more than full of fine plants, little palms, splendid fuchsias, and geraniums, cactuses, dracænas, coleus, and very fine petunias. The tree of heaven is here; about a hundred different sorts of gorgeous winter flowering chrysanthemums are also met with, and the hoye or wax-flower in full bloom. All lady visitors are charmed with a diminutive specimen of conservatory rockwork, in the semblance of a series of ruined arches, bedecked with splendid ferns. There are also a number of interesting water beetles in a small tank, darting up and down like Cartesian devils. Many of

the tropical plants are growing in the outside at this season. With regard to these we must remember, as has been well remarked by an eminent authority on the subject, that, as we usually see them in this part of the globe in a diminutivestate, we often forget that, when branched into a large head in their native countries, they are not a whit more marked in foliage than many of the trees in our pleasure grounds. How true this is, may be guessed by the untraveller, from the elegant aspect of the date palm and of the fan palm apparently springing out of the grass on the south side of the main walk in Victoria Park. The isolated position assigned to these palms heightens the effect vastly. On a similar principle, while European emigrants find a most depressing and dreary monotony in the interminable gum trees in the Antipodean "bush," the eucalyptus globulus (or blue gum tree) for instance, rising eighteen feet above the odorous myrrh bed not far south of the lodge, is open to view on all sides, and presents a really graceful appearance. The other aromatic trees (including twelve varieties of eucalyptus) in the park are also effectively disposed, while the spiny Mexican aloes in the vases here and there, especially when set off by brilliant nasturtiums, look remarkably well. The cabbage palms, and the great Abyssinian bananas or paims (*musa ensete*) with their strikingly large leaves, are also to be seen outside in goodly number. A rational system is that which avoids the rearing of those tender exotics which only live a sickly existence in a greenhouse of continuous tropical or sub-tropical temperature, and prefers subjects, of which many fine-leaved ones are to be found, which will stand out in summer without the least injury, and may be transferred to the conservatory during the cold months to produce as fine an effect there as in the flower garden. This plan has been apparently the rule here. We understand the tropical plants possessed have all been reared in the greenhouse in the place, and have grown in size with the park's increase in years, and if their dimensions exceed the present greenhouse accommodation, the public need not grudge an extension. A real palm-house, with gossamer-like span roof—a small erection in the style of Kew or Edinburgh say

—a witching fairyland crystal coverture for a winter garden—is perhaps not beyond the desire of the guardians of the public purse to combine economy with the perennial delectation of the citizens. Numerous letters in our columns have suggested such an erection.

So much for the wisdom of selecting hardy plants. By annually cutting down young specimens of various hardy trees and shrubs, insuring a simple-stemmed growth, as is done with the paulownia imperialis and others in the park, a finer effect is usually got than from tender plants. Along the side, between Thomson Street and the gardener's lodge, are a number of very fine beds, and it is a great assistance that these have all printed name cards in a neat frame. There is, for instance, a whole bed of canna, or Indian shot; in others we find a white abutilon, showing much white blossom, also fine specimens of the abutilon Thompsoni, with its variegated leaves; the weeping locust honey tree, the Italian myrtle, the Norfolk Island pine, gum trees, and a host of others too numerous to mention. One bed alone contains 23 different plants, all named on the card. Close to the greenhouse are several immense thistles and sunflowers, which attract all eyes.

There is a vast number of different trees in the park, from the sacred cedar to the common elm, but all should see for themselves the trees and shrubs, the syringas (lilacs), hollyhocks, maples, planes, tulip trees, birches, weigelas, filberts, sumachs, poplars, acacias, ash trees, thorns, limes, barberries, hazels, willows, oaks, Irish yews, and many varieties of chestnuts, beeches, elders, pines, and firs, of which latter are a number of rare trees presented to the park by the late Dr Dickie. Taken all in all, Victoria is, for its size, the pink of pleasure parks, and has been continuously under the care of Mr Robert Walker since its establishment. It is well there is such a place in the vicinity of a well-populated district, as, from the absence of any "model gardens," the industrial classes in Aberdeen have not much chance of having little gardens for themselves. There is a field at the end of Westfield Terrace (at present lying fallow) which would make a convenient site for such a purpose. We regret that

the exigencies of space prohibit our dilating on this subject or offering some suggestions as to the improvement of some of the local graveyards.

IV.

Union Terrace Gardens.

THIS place has been the subject of no end of remarks. There was room for comment one can see. But the breakneck paths have for years been effaced, and most of the criticism is of that useless kind that consists in everybody being firmly of opinion that he could have laid out the wooded bank on its transference to the public better than has been done. The word "gardens" is rather a misnomer. A dozen vases and a rood or so of level portion, with three little sober-hued carpet beds and five or six more showy flower beds of chrysanthemums, geraniums, violets, &c., do not admit much scope for the gardener's art. The floral display has, however, been admirable enough this summer, considering the poverty of the ground. The soil is also very thin on the slope; but the trees and shrubs there have stood the drought wonderfully, those above and behind the ancient Corbie Well growing in charming profusion, forming a perfect thicket. There is a good selection of ivies in the gardens; the beech hedge along the railway side promises well, and will soon prove a great improvement; while the clump of trees near the railway tunnel beyond the footbridge is also thriving. The speluncar recesses of "The Dean's Grotto," with its rich, spray-like display of ferns, its stalactites, climbing plants, and trickling rill, formed in the sultry days, as they do still, a pretty spectacle, while some attempt is made at a wall garden close by. It has been suggested that the rill in the grotto might be continued down the face of the bank to form a tiny cascade in a tiny gorge—a miniature Corriemulzie Linn in short—but what the civic rulers think of the matter we cannot tell. The grotto is an interesting

reminiscence of the Auld Bow Brig; and we shall regret if the widening of Union Terrace in connection with the Rosemount Access should interfere with it. One feels tempted to ask whether the St Nicholas Association is fairly defunct, so many topics crop up daily well within the sphere of such a society.


Including the footbridge and band kiosk this pleasure ground cost about £5300, and it is really a most incongruous thing to have enclosed the portion north of the footbridge with an expensive railing, with a view to its forming part of the recreation area, and then let it out as a bleaching-green (now also systematically used as an exhibition ground for clothes-lines) at a rent of about a pound a month. Why not carry out the previous plan and form a howling-green, raising the level the necessary height above the covering of the Denburn? or else simply open the gate and invite the public to use it as a promenade ground? The flat portion is far too limited here, especially on musical evenings. If the Town Council have any real anxiety for the purity of the Mutton Brae linen, let them consider Dr Simpson's suggestion for a public wash-house. Attach such an institution to the Crooked Lane baths. Hot water boilers exist there already.

The local *élite* do not make a fashionable lounge of the gardens. A fair member of the *ton* was heard lately to declare she never saw anybody but common people there. She "assisted" at a band performance from a superior position in Union Terrace, whence a delightful view of the freshly-painted cerulean blue top of the kiosk is obtained. This erection looks well enough from the distance of Union Bridge, but is really a hideous object as contemplated from Union Terrace or the footbridge. It practically monopolises the whole open space where it is. Place it rather on the parade ground of Duthie Park, where it may be a thing of beauty, and a joy for ever. This young lady struck the nail on the head in respect of the swarms of children who find in this park a romping place and playground near their own doors. And why not? Are there not regular play corners in the Paris parks for children, with seats around for the *bonnes*? The goodwives of the Denburn quarter venture into Union Terrace

Gardens unbonneted and unshawled, a thing they would hardly dare to do at Duthie Park. As a territorial park the gardens are thus fairly successful, and strangers—country excursionists at least—find them an attraction and a picturesque and pleasant feature so near the middle of the town. The absence of rests in any of our thoroughfares, including even Castle Street, makes a seat in the park welcome after parading the hard, stony streets. The twelve garden chairs are soon crowded on such occasions, and the visitors from Deeside or Buchan, or the Garioch or the Mearns, are obliged to sit or stretch themselves on the grass. The number of seats in the gardens should, we suggest, be doubled or increased in number to a score. A long curved stone bench along the semicircular curve at the bank foot near the band kiosque would be convenient, and a rustic rest might with propriety be placed beside the Corbie Well.

V.

The Links.

FTER all, the "fields and plains called the Links, between the watermouth of Dee and the watermouth of Don," with the benty hillocks, the eminence known as the Broad Hill, and the shining sands, constitute the park of Aberdeen. These cost the burghers of the "Braif Toune" nothing, and the elaborate charter of King Charles I. in 1638 merely confirmed recognised previous rights, provable by use and wont, and ancient and continuous possession. But if Duthie Park, with its 44 acres, represents a money value of fifty thousand pounds, who shall estimate the worth of the glorious stretch of common, covering a superficies of nearly half a square mile? In the Links there are no gardens of roses, neither do the minions of luxury rove there, unless an occasional "masher" skater or football player in the cold months, or the gaudy golfer, who roams there summer and winter, can be accounted as such. But the landscape is often gay enough for all that. The view from the Broad Hill

is magnificent, unsurpassed far and near. The field of vision includes the whole expanse of links from the estuary of the Dee northwards past the Cowhillock and the Canny Sweet Pots, and on beyond the sinuous Don to the hill of the Black Dog. The eye takes in at a sweep the coast line from Buchanness to Girdleness; and the gazer marks the passing sail "far, far at sea," or spies the "lang-awa' ship come hame," slowly forging into the harbour mouth, or the fishing fleet stretching out into the east as the case may be. Not many seek, even at this time of the autumn equinox, to get out of bed and witness sunrise on the German Ocean, in fine weather a glorious sight reserved for the early golfer, or the early bather, who enjoys his morning bath in the sea at the same time. The Broad Hill also commands a fine view of the town, and the gaze of the beholder may wander from the extremity of the Grampian range to the beautiful wooded braes of Don, beyond the venerable College and Cathedral in Old Aberdeen. The East End prairie is not a barren wilderness. It presents a rare field—especially the Old Town Links—for the botanist in search of dwarf plants. The pretty blue bell of Scotland nods here and there, and the wild thyme makes a beautiful natural carpet, which looks extremely lovely when in bloom, especially when the sun shines brightly; and the humble bee or speckled butterfly sips nectar from the blossom as eagerly as sheep or ponies nibble the fragrant thymy grass. Sedums, or stonecrops, greatly prized for ornamental gardening, grow wild on the Links; and, besides the more ordinary heath and Alpine plants that abound there, it is wonderful how many rare and curious tiny plants may be found on the arenaceous soil. In the Links, beauty unadorned is adorned the most. The hand of man seems only to have marred its natural advantages. The unsæsthetic concrete gunpowder magazines, in shape and size like a Glumdalclitch's travelling trunk, can hardly be said to be an improvement, or the herring fishing nets and logs of wood laid down on the Queen's Links an advisable use of the patrimony of the people. Neither will the shelter at present being erected prove anything of an ornament, one is afraid. The esplanade along the sea beach also would have been tended to

anywhere else so as to make a fine marine parade. It is not considered "the thing" among the local "Upper Ten" to promenade on the Links. We do not value what is near at hand. The British tourist who found a life-long dweller on the banks of the blue Danube ignorant even of its very name, because he had never heard it called anything but "the river," was no better observer of beauties at his own home when he rushed off to "the Continent," simply because "society" all did the same.

Of the usefulness of the Links for immense public gatherings; in connection with volunteering; and for cricket, football, and all sorts of athletic exercises, we have no room to speak. The Links have been sorely tried by drought this season, and great patches, instead of being green and fresh, have looked like macadamised roads. The Highland Society's Oatle Show and the turf carnival have also not conduced to the amenity of the Queen's Links this year. Still the Links form the park of the whole people. Its extent and position cannot be rivalled by any other. One feels room to breathe, and the trammels of society may be shaken off even by the quality children who build mock castles on the sands with their tiny spades, under the eye of Betsy Jane or Mary Ann, cheek by jowl with the barefooted *gamin* who wades in the "merry wee waves," or turns somersaults on the sandhills with equal indifference. Even the West End paterfamilias may loll at full length on the turf of the Broad Hill without the appreciable loss of dignity and caste which would follow such a procedure in Duthie Park. It seems to us that a number of additional iron seats on the hill and along the esplanade, and a wider rustic horse-shoe stone bench at the "Gibberie Wallie" would be a decided improvement.

Seaside planting has been tried with no little success at various places. Organised experiments have been made at Cove and Kiloregga, but we do not think we are warranted in drawing an exact parallel between what we have seen there or at Tighnabruaich and the circumstances at Aberdeen. The results at Lytham we have not seen, but they were described in the *Field* a number of years ago as very striking. We have also made personal observation of the public park at Saltburn-by-the-Sea, in

Yorkshire, and at Dunrobin, in Sutherlandshire, on the East Coast, and think the following a feasible suggestion for Aberdeen.

If occurs to us, therefore, that an attempt might be made to beautify the Links somewhat, or, at least, to make the place look a little less bald and bare, by planting some trees and shrubs on the east face of the Broad Hill. There is plenty of space; and although we need hardly expect luxuriant groves to spring up and clothe its exposed slope, it is possible that something better than a scraggy array of dwarfed and stunted shrubs might be reared in the course of not so many years, if protection is duly given at first from the destructive instincts of youthful Aberdeen, as well as from the blast. The *pinus Austriaca*, for example, which, in its native haunts in Lower Austria and the Black Forest, is a large and noble tree, perhaps unequalled for shelter, densely branched as it is and thickly covered with dark glossy leaves four or five inches long, and which is, moreover, an evergreen tree sought after elsewhere for ornamental purposes, is suitable for almost any situation, and grows very well near the sea. There is a thriving specimen, already eight or ten feet high, in Victoria Park, presented (along with young specimens of *picea Fraseri* or double balsam fir, *pinus Nordmanniana*, *picea nobilis* or noble silver fir, and others) by the late Dr Dickie, Professor of Botany in Aberdeen University. Among other trees, shrubs, and plants which we think would grow on the hill are the Japan spindle tree, Scotch holly and other thick-leaved varieties, the Scotch rose or brier, a number of ivies, *rhododendrons*, the goatwillow or sallow tree, seaside willow, Himalayan willow, osier, rowan tree, the plane (*acer pseudo-platanus*), the wych elm (*ulmus montana*); the Corsican pine, the maritime pine, and the mountain pine—all three evergreen; common hawthorn, Scotch laburnum, hornbeam, gray poplar, alder, tamarisks, hazels, flowering currants, junipers, snowberry, *sambuca nigra* or elder, &c., &c. We would suggest therefore an experiment in planting on the east side of the hill, where there are numbers of hollows, and perhaps also on the west border. This would cost little, and if planted in October, and protected well at first, the specimens would probably

show the requisite persistency. In order to obviate any possibility of failure, the planting would, of course, have to be put in the hands of a careful expert. But if a sufficient quantity of mould be brought to the place and the trees and shrubs put in in clusters, even those most incredulous of the practicability of the scheme admit that by the shelter and advantage thus afforded there is a fair chance of success. The selva of ground between the base of the hill proper and the road on its east side is, in particular, very suitable for the experiment, and not being exposed very much, there is little risk of failure there. A row of poplars, similar to those that have thriven so well in Thomson Street, might likewise with advantage be planted on the grass along the side of the road at the back of the Bannermill, between Cotton Street and Constitution Street. A shady avenue might be constituted there in due course of time, and the trees would be in nobody's way.

11 North Silver Street,
Aberdeen, 5th September, 1885.



